

AN

EXPLANATION

OF THE

Duties of Religion,

FOR THE USE OF

BOLDRE SCHOOL,

IN

NEW FOREST.

N. B.

The small Paper prefixed, which is the ground-work of this Explanation, is distributed in little books among the Children of the Parish, before they come to School.

LYMINGTON:

PRINTED BY J. B. RUTTER,

1798.

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Would you know, whether you
BELIEVE and LIVE as a
Christian ought to do, ask
yourself these questions.

Of Faith.

I. DO I believe in God?—Do I believe
that he is a Being of infinite jus-
tice, power, wisdom and goodness?—
that he made and preserves every thing?
—that he is present every where?—and
knows all the thoughts and intentions of
my heart?

II. Do I believe the holy scriptures to be
the word of God?—and that they con-
tain all things necessary to salvation?

III. Do I believe in Jesus Christ, the son of
God?—Do I believe in the history of
him contained in the holy scriptures?—
and particularly in that great article, that
he suffered death for the sins of man-
kind?

IV. Do I believe that God will assist me by
his Holy Spirit?

V. Do I believe in a future state?—in the
resurrection of the dead?—and in a last
judgement?

Of Practice.

I. **I**S my *life* consistent with my *faith*?—
that is, doth my faith govern my
practice?

Doth my belief in the justice, and
power of God make me reverence his
laws, and afraid of offending him?—
Doth my belief in his wisdom make me
satisfied with my station in life; and
give me patience, and resignation in my
distresses?—Doth my belief in his good-
ness excite me to love him?—And is
my belief of his continual presence a
check on the badness of my thoughts,
words, and actions?

If my faith in God produce these ef-
fects, have I such a sense of my depen-
dence on him, that I pray daily to him?
—Do I go regularly to church, to pray
to him in public, as well as in private?
—and do I remember what I hear, and
endeavour to live up to it?

II. As I believe the holy scriptures to be
the word of God, do I read them with an
intention to improve my heart; and
obey the precepts, which I find in them?

Do

Do I learn from them, in the first place, to abstain from every wickedness?

—If I have been led into sin, do I immediately repent of it, and not suffer it to become habitual?

Do I likewise learn from the holy scriptures to do good, as well as to avoid evil?—Do I love my neighbour as my self?—And do I do to others, as I might reasonably desire them to do to me?—Do I endeavour to do my duty faithfully, whatever my station is, *as to the Lord, and not unto man?*

On the whole, do I find myself increase in goodness; and do I feel a pleasure in obeying God, and in doing my duty?—knowing that the life of a christian should always be advancing towards perfection?

III. As I believe in Jesus Christ, and in his suffering death for the sins of mankind, do I trust in his merits alone for my salvation?

As I have been baptized into the faith of Christ by one sacrament, do I always, when I can, attend the other at the Lord's table?

when

IV. Have I such an humble sense of my own weakness, that I endeavour to obtain the assistance of the holy Spirit of God; knowing that without his assistance I can do nothing?

V. Lastly, does my belief in a future state, and in the resurrection of the dead, raise my thoughts above this mortal life?—and does my belief in a last judgement, make me in earnest careful to prepare myself for it?

O LORD,

*Morning and Evening Prayers for the
Children.*

O LORD, who commandest me both to believe, and to live, as a christian ought to do ; assist me by thy blessed Spirit in obtaining that stedfast faith in Thee, that may govern all my actions—that I may stand in fear of offending Thee, from the consideration of thy power and justice—that I may love, and obey Thee, from the persuation of thy goodness—and that I may put my trust in Thee, and bear with patience every thing, that befalls me, from a full assurance of thy wisdom ; that having thus endeavoured, through faith in Thee, to perform my duty in this world, I may be removed in thy good time, to a better, through the merits and atonement of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

O LORD God, in whom I live, and move, and have my being, accept my praise and thanksgiving for all thy mercies to me from the first moment of my birth to this time. Pardon all my past offences ; and grant that I may seek my happiness only in obeying Thee ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

EXPLA-

Morning and Evening Prayer for the

LORD, who commandest me both to believe, and to live, as a Christian ought to do; assist me by thy blessed Spirit in overcoming all my actions—that I may stand in fear of offending Thee, from the consideration of thy power and justice—that I may love, and obey Thee, from the persuasion of thy goodness—and that I may put my trust in Thee, and bear with patience every thing that befalls me, from a full reliance of thy wisdom; that having thus endeavoured through faith in Thee, to perform my duty in this world, I may be removed in thy good time, to a better, through the merits and atonement of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

LORD God, in whom I live, and move, and have my being, accept my praise and thanksgiving for all thy mercies to me from the first moment of my birth to this time. Pardon all my past offences; and grant that I may seek my happiness only in obeying Thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

EXTRA.

EXPLANATION

THE FOREGOING PAPER.

I.

Of Faith;

Or what a Christian should BELIEVE.

Question. You are required, you see, both to *believe* and *live* as a christian ought to do; what are you then required first to *believe*?

Answer. I must believe in God—that he is a Being of *infinite justice, power, wisdom, and goodness.*

Q. When you say you believe God is a Being of *infinite justice*, what do you mean?

A. I mean, that God is just to all his creatures; and particularly that he will reward and punish us in the next world, according to our behaviour in this.

B

Q. What

Q. What do you mean when you say he is a Being of *infinite power*?

A. I mean, that God can do every thing; and that every thing, that is done, is done by him.

Q. But why do you believe that; when you know many things are done by men?

A. Because it is through God, that men are enabled to do any thing. Besides, God makes the stone, the iron, the wood, and all other things, which men use.

Q. What do you mean, when you say God is a Being of *infinite wisdom*?

A. I mean, that God knows every thing; and particularly what is best for us all.

Q. And when you say, God is a Being of *infinite goodness*, what do you mean?

A. I mean, that his goodness is unbounded, and, that all the good we receive of every kind, comes from him.

Q. But you receive good sometimes from men?

A. Yes: but God enables them to do it, by putting it into their hearts—by affording them opportunities—and by giving them the means. So that all the good men do, may properly be said to come from God.

Q. You say farther you believe that God *created* and *preserves* every thing; why do you believe that God created every thing?

A. Because

A. Because I see every where the *marks of design*,

Q. What do you mean by the *marks of design*?

A. I mean that when *one part answers to another* in any thing, and an *end is produced*, there are the *marks of design*, or *contrivance*, in that thing.

Q. But you see these *marks of design* and *contrivance* in the works of men—you see in a house, for instance, the roof, the door, the windows, and all the other parts *related* to each other—and an *end produced* by its affording a convenient shelter from the weather: but you do not believe in God, because you see the *marks of design* in a house?

A. No: but as the *marks of design* in a house shew me that it has been made by the skill, and *contrivance* of men, and not by chance; so when I see *superior marks of design* in things which men cannot make—as in the sun—in plants—in beasts—in birds—in fishes—and numberless other things, I conclude they are created by God.

Q. Tell me then what *relation* there is between the sun and the earth, for instance, and what *ends are produced* by it?

A. The sun draws vapours, or particles of water, both from the sea and land, just in the same way as particles of water are formed by heat

heat on the lid of a boiling pot. These vapours, which the sun draws up, become clouds; and are driven about by winds to different parts of the earth; and when they fall in rain, the *end they produce*, is food for man and beast.—The sun also gives light to the earth; and warms it, so as to make it fruitful.

Q. How do you observe this *relation of parts, and end produced*, in plants?

A. The root is *related* to the earth, and draws nourishment from it—the stem is *related* to the root, and carries that nourishment up to the flower; from which the *end produced* is the seed, or fruit.

Q. What marks of *design* do you see in animals?

A. They are all *fitted to their several stations*; and the *end produced* is to fill every part of the world with living creatures; all of which have their use, tho we cannot find out the use of all.

Q. How is the bird fitted for its station?

A. It has wings to fly with—it is made light—and sharp-pointed, so as to pass easily through the air.

Q. How is the fish fitted for its station?

A. It has fins to swim with; and when it wants to go to the top of the water, or to the bottom, it has a little bladder, which it can fill

fill with air, and empty, as it chuses. When the bladder is filled, the fish is lighter than the water, and rises to the top; when the bladder is emptied, the fish is heavier, and sinks to the bottom.—Some fish keep constantly at the bottom, because they find their food there.

Q. How is the mole fitted for its way of life?

A. It has short broad feet, with which it scrapes away the earth: and as it has no business out of the ground, its eyes are very small, and just serve to shew it that it has lost its way when it gets into the light.

Q. Thus then, in the same manner, every creature is fitted for the station it lives in; which shews they are all created by an Almighty power, and not by chance.—But you say you believe God *preserves* the world, as well as created it; what do you mean by God's *preserving* the world?

A. I mean that he keeps it in the same order, in which he at first created it.

Q. Why do you believe that?

A. Because if God did not keep it in order, it would fall to decay; just as a house would fall to decay, if it were not kept in order. It is through a belief that God preserves the world, that all the affairs of life are carried on. We eat, and drink, because we believe

believe the life of man will be nourished by food, as it always has been. We plant trees, and sow corn, because we believe they will grow as they have ever done, for our use, and sustenance. If God did not preserve the world in its regular order, corn might produce weeds.

Q. You say, you believe farther, that God is *present every where*. But how does that differ from your being present every where? You can be in this place, and in that place, and in many different places?

A. I can only be in one place at one time; but God is in all places at the *same instant of time*.

Q. Why do you believe that?

A. It follows from God's preserving the world. As he preserves every part of it at once, he must be present in every part at once.—Besides, if God was not in all places at once, he would order the people of one country to pray to him at one time, and the people of another country to pray to him at another. But as they may pray to him all at once, it is plain he can hear them all at once.

Q. You say you believe God knows *all the thoughts and intentions of your heart*. Why do you believe that?

A. Because as God made me, he must know every part about me; just as a man that makes

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makes a house, must be acquainted with the inside, as well as the outside, and all the parts about it.

II.

Q. You next say, you believe the *holy scriptures to be the word of God*. What do you mean by the holy scriptures?

A. The Bible and Testament.

Q. Why are they called the word of God?

A. Because holy men wrote them by God's order.

Q. What do you mean when you say, they contain *all things necessary to salvation*?

A. I mean, that they contain all things necessary for us to know, and do, in order to gain God's favour, and everlasting happiness.

Q. But there are many difficulties in the scriptures, both in the old and new Testament; and many things which we do not understand; how then can they be of use to us?

A. There is enough in them which we do understand, that is sufficient to lead us right.

Q. But why should there be any difficulties in books meant to be of such use to us?

A. In the old Testament many difficulties arise from our not considering, that God acted

in a different manner in the early ages of the world, and particularly towards the Jews, from that, in which he acts now.—Besides, we make difficulties ourselves by supposing, that many actions are allowable, because they are done by good men. Whereas, in fact, many of these actions were never intended for our imitation. Some of them were bad in themselves; and many things, tho' allowed under the law of Moses, are not permitted by the gospel.—Lastly, as the Bible is the oldest book, that ever was written, it may be supposed, that many things may have become obscure, and difficult through length of time.

Q. But we find difficulties also in the new Testament?

A. It is generally supposed there are much fewer, than might have been expected from its ancient date; and from the Jewish ways of speaking, and Jewish customs, which we find in it, and which are so different from ours.

Q. Give me an instance of some way of speaking among the Jews, that is different from ours.

A. Our Saviour says, *He that hateth not his father, and mother, cannot be my disciple*: but he means only, that we should love God better than we do our fathers and mothers—and the Jews understood it in that sense.—

Again,

Again, where it is said *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*; nothing is meant but that God intended to raise the Jewish nation from Jacob.

Q. What instances can you give me of difficulties arising from *Jewish customs*?

A. We are told that a man was let down through the tiling of a house before Jesus. This would be difficult in our houses; but was very easy in a Jewish house, which was often only one story high—had a flat roof—and sometimes a trap door through the roof, into the chamber below; with stairs on the outside. So that nothing was easier, than to carry the man to the top of the house, and let him down through the roof.—To such houses our Saviour alludes, when he says, *He that is on the house-top, let him not come down into the house. And, What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye from the house-top*; which was the most convenient way of speaking to the people; because the windows were high, and latticed.—When we are told also, that *new wine will burst old bottles*, it is easy to conceive it, when we know that the Jewish bottles were made of leather.—Again, we read in the story of the good Samaritan, that he *pulled out two-pence and gave it to the host*; which appears to us a very trifling sum. But the penny that passed in Judea, was somewhat

what more than seven pence of our money ; so that two-pence was as much as fifteen or sixteen pence with us ; and as things were cheaper in Judea than they are here, fifteen or sixteen pence would buy as much as four or five shillings could buy now.

Q. But still the scripture may be false ; what reason have you for believing it is true ?

A. Because there were people alive, when it was written, who could remember the miracles, and other things mentioned ; and could compare the things done, with the things that were written : and if it had been found to mention things that had never been done, it would not have been suffered to come down to us as true.—Learned men also can even trace up the new Testament from its being mentioned in different books, to the very time, when it was written.

III.

Q. As you believe the scripture therefore to be true, you believe next in Jesus Christ, the son of God—and in the history of him, as contained in the new Testament ; let me hear you repeat the history of Jesus Christ, as it is drawn up in the Creed.

A. I believe

A. I believe, that he was born of the Virgin Mary—suffered under Pontius Pilate—was crucified—dead—and buried—he descended into hell—the third day he rose again from the dead—he ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God, the father Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Q. What do you mean by Christ's *descending into hell*?

A. Only that his soul and body were separated—that is, that he *really died*. *Hell* means only the *grave*.

Q. What is the great article that you believe, with regard to Jesus Christ?

A. That he suffered death for the sins of mankind.

Q. But how came mankind to want a Saviour to suffer death for their sins?

A. Because, on Adam's transgression, all his posterity became corrupt, and subject to God's displeasure.

Q. In what did Adam's transgression consist?

A. In eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. But does it not appear very hard that God Almighty should punish Adam so much merely for eating an apple; or whatever the forbidden fruit was?

A. The sin did not consist in eating the fruit, but in disobeying God. God placed
Adam

Adam in a state of trial, as he places us ; but as it was before the world had any people in it, his trial must have been in some very easy thing. He could not be guilty of theft, or envy, or covetousness, or bearing false witness, or almost any of the crimes, which are now forbidden, because there were then no inhabitants in the world. Nor could he practice many of the duties, which men now practice. He could not be charitable, nor forgive injuries ; nor honour his father and mother. And as he lived in a garden, nothing could be more natural, than to put his obedience to the test of refraining from a certain tree.

Q. But does it not seem hard that Adam's posterity should suffer through his fault ?

A. It does not appear that he had any posterity at the time of the fall ; so that his children could not properly be said to lose what they never possessed.

Q. As Christ redeemed us then from the mischiefs of the fall of Adam, let me know, in what way his sufferings atoned for the sins of mankind ?

A. It is impossible for any body to answer that question : but as I believe the scripture to be true, I believe in the atonement of Christ, which is the plain doctrine of scripture, tho I do not understand it. I believe the fact, tho I cannot explain it.

Q. But

Q. But why should not the scripture explain it?

A. Because if they did, we should not be able to understand them. There are some things in the scriptures, which relate to God; and other things which relate to man. *Secret things, we are told, belong unto the Lord.* We may however believe these things, tho we do not understand them. It is enough, if we have sufficient proof that the scriptures are true, and that what relates to ourselves is plain, and easy.

Q. What then are the thoughts, which the sufferings of Jesus Christ should raise in our minds?

A. We should reflect with the highest gratitude on his great kindness in laying down his life for our sake; we should think with the deepest humility on our sinful nature which occasioned it; and always have in our minds how ungrateful we are, if we do not leave off our sins, and lead good lives, which is all the return he requires.

IV.

Q. You say, you next believe, that *God will assist you with his holy spirit*: what makes the assistance of God's holy spirit necessary?

A. Man-

A. Mankind's corrupt and sinful nature, since the fall of Adam. The scriptures tell us *we can do no good thing without the assistance of the spirit of God.*

Q. If that be the case, and we can do no thing good without the assistance of the spirit of God, what good is there in any thing we can do, for the spirit of God does it for us?

A. We have a choice, either to listen to the holy spirit of God, or to the temptations of the world: and our goodness depends on little more than that choice. God also gives us opportunities of being good, and we may improve them, or throw them behind us, as we chuse. If we improve them, his holy spirit will farther assist us.

Q. But what reason have you to believe the holy spirit of God will assist you, or act within you, as you cannot feel it?

A. My not feeling it, is no more a reason for my disbelieving it, than my not feeling my soul is a reason for my disbelieving I have one. As the scriptures therefore assure me I shall be assisted by the holy spirit of God, and as it is not in the least more difficult to believe, than the union of my soul, and body, I believe it.

V.

Q. You say you next believe in a *future state.*

re. *state.* What do you believe about a future
res. *state?*

the *A.* I believe that when I die, I shall not
no. perish ; but shall live hereafter in a state of
irrit. happiness or of misery.

we *Q.* And when you say you believe in the
the *resurrection of the dead*, what do you mean ?

of *A.* I mean that my body shall rise from the
us grave, and be united again to my soul.

m. *Q.* Do you mean, that the dust, into
we which your body will be crumbled, shall be-
irrit come again a living body ?

ve *A.* Yes. There is no more reason for my
disbelieving, that God will raise my body
again from the dust, than that God created
man at first out of dust. So I believe the
scripture account of both.--Besides, I see
Et many things in the world like such a resur-
rection. I see trees dying in winter, and re-
living in summer ; I see corn buried in the
earth ; and shooting up again in the spring.

Con *Q.* Do you believe it will be the same
my body ?

ve *A.* What kind of body it will be, I do not
me know. We have reason to believe from scrip-
od, ture, that in some way, it will be the same
to body ; and yet that the blessed will, in some
ly, way, receive glorified bodies.

ure *Q.* You say farther you believe in a *last*
te. judgment ;

judgment : what do you believe with regard to a last judgment?

A. I believe, that at the end of this world, we shall be called into judgment for what we have done, while we lived upon earth : and that we shall be rewarded, or punished, as we have obeyed, or disobeyed the commandments of God.

Q. By whom shall we be judged ?

A. By Jesus Christ.

Q. The *scriptures*, no doubt, speak frequently of a future judgment : but are there any appearances in this world, which tend to confirm the scripture account ?

A. Yes, many : This world has every where the appearance of a state of trial—rather than of a state of full reward and punishment. We see many inequalities in it—virtue often afflicted—and vice in prosperity. These things in a state of trial are easily accounted for ; but certainly shew that some future state is to be expected, when rewards and punishments shall in exact proportion be distributed.

Of Practice ;

Or, a GOOD LIFE.

I.

Q. Thus far relates to your *faith* ; or to what you *believe* : but is that all that is required of a christian ?

A. No : his *faith* is of no value, if his *life* be not consistent with it. His faith must govern his actions ; and produce good works, as a good tree produces good fruit.

Q. You say then you *believe* in the *justice*, and *power* of God : that is, you *believe* he will render exact *justice* to you hereafter ; and treat you in the next world, as you have lived in this ; and likewise that he has the power to reward you with the greatest happiness, or punish you with the greatest misery. — Now if you really *believe* these things, what *effect* should they have upon you ?

A. They should make me reverence God's laws ; and afraid of offending him.

Q. You say you *believe* in the infinite wis-
dom,

dom of God : that is, that God knows every thing : and particularly what is best for us all. If you really do *believe* this, what *effect* should it have upon you ?

A. It should make me *satisfied with my station in life ; and give me patience, and resignation in all the afflictions God is pleased to lay upon me.*

Q. You say, you *believe* in the *goodness* of God ; that is, that all the good you receive of every kind comes from God. What is the good you receive from God ?

A. My life—food—raiment—every thing I have. Yet as God lays no stress either on riches or poverty, but considers them both as the means of trial only ; the great good I hope from God, is the happiness of the next world ; in comparison with which, the riches of this world are nothing.

Q. In what does the happiness of the next world consist ?

A. We can know only what the scriptures tell us. They do not explain the happiness of the next world, but just inform us that it will be very great. And God Almighty expects we should believe and trust in him for the completion of his promises—that is, he expects we should rely upon his word.

A. If then you really believe you are indebted to God for all this goodness, both
here

here and hereafter, what *effect* should it have upon you?

A. It should excite me to love him; and to shew that love by keeping his commandments, and feeling my chief pleasure in obeying him. It should lessen also my love for this world; and increase my faith in the promises of the next.

Q. You say farther, that you *believe* God is *every where present*; and *knows all the thoughts and intentions of your heart*. If you really *believe* this, what *effect* should it have upon you?

A. It should be a *check on the badness of my thoughts, words, and actions*. If a bad thought should ever come into mind, I should immediately turn it out, when I consider that God sees it.

Q. If then you truly and sincerely believe in the infinite power, the wisdom, and goodness of God—that every thing you have, or hope for, comes from him—that he is present every where, and knows all your thoughts—your *faith* in this beneficent Being will naturally give you such a dependence on him, as will incline you to *pray* to him. What ought to be the subject of your prayers?

A. I ought to praise God for his mercies—to beg his pardon for my sins through the atonement of Christ—to pray for the assistance
of

of his holy spirit in all my religious duties—and for his blessing on all my worldly concerns.

Q. But is it sufficient to pray to God in private?

A. No : family prayer is highly proper, and may be used in most families : but *public worship* at church should be omitted by none.

Q. How does it appear to be a duty to go to church?

A. We have our Saviour's example, who used, on the sabbath-day to go to the synagogue, which was the Jewish church.—Public worship also is frequently recommended in different parts of scripture. Indeed all people want either to have their duty explained, or to be reminded of it.

II.

Q. The next thing you say you *believe* is, that the *holy scriptures are the word of God*. If you really believe they are the word of God, how should you read them?

A. With an intention to improve my heart, by believing the *doctrines*, and obeying the *precepts* contained in them.

Q. What do you mean by the *doctrines* of scripture?

A. I mean

A. I mean particularly the divinity of our blessed Saviour—his atonement for the sins of mankind—the assistance of the holy spirit—the resurrection of the dead—and a last judgment.

Q. And what is the great end of the precepts you find in the scriptures?

A. To teach us to *avoid wickedness, and practice goodness.*

Q. As wickedness surrounds you on every side, it is always right to have an eye upon such sins as *most easily beset you.* What sins should you particularly avoid?

A. A disregard to God, and religion—sabbath-breaking—swearing—lying—cheating—envy—malice—hatred—lewd discourse and actions. The catechism comprehends all sin under the *world—the flesh—and the devil.*—The *world* affords temptations—the *flesh*, or our own bad desires, are suited to those temptations—and the *devil* we are told, is continually drawing us into them.

Q. What does the scripture require, if you have been unhappily drawn into sin?

A. It requires us to repent of it, that it may not become habitual.

Q. What do you mean by habitual sin?

A. A sin that is committed over and over, without any check of conscience. As some wicked people, for instance, have gotten so
vile

vile a custom of swearing, that they will sometimes swear, and hardly know when they swear.

Q. And is their not knowing when they swear, an excuse for them?

A. No: because they have brought themselves into that condition through their own fault.

Q. So again when people get drunk, and commit mischief, is their drunkenness an excuse for them?

A. No: the same reason holds against them in this case also. They were drunk through their own fault.

Q. What do you mean by *repenting*?

A. I mean not only being sorry for what I have done amiss, and changing my life; but changing also my very thoughts and wishes.

Q. Suppose you had told a lye, and had been punished for it, and therefore were afraid of telling a lie again; is that repenting of it?

A. No: it is only being afraid of punishment.

Q. But suppose you had told a lie, and yet would not tell another, tho you were sure nobody could find you out; is that repenting of it?

A. Yes: because in that case, I am not afraid

afraid of punishment; but of doing a wrong thing.

Q. And on a supposition, that you truly repent of your sins, what do you hope from God?

A. I humbly hope, that my sins will be blotted out through the merits of Christ—that my own endeavours will be assisted by God's holy spirit—and that I shall be reconciled to God, and restored to his favour.

Q. But you learn from the holy scriptures, you say, to *practice goodness*, as well as to *avoid wickedness*,—to love your neighbour, in the first place, as yourself: What do you mean by loving your Neighbour as yourself?

A. I mean being as ready to do good to him, as to receive good from him.

Q. Whom do you mean by your neighbour?

A. All mankind, as appears from many parts of scripture; but especially from our Saviour's parable of the good Samaritan. The Jews considered the Samaritans as enemies; and as we learn from the parable to do good to our enemies, it surely follows, that we should do good to all mankind.

Q. How are you to act in order to do to others, as you might reasonably desire them to do to you?

A. When-

A. Whenever I am going to do any thing to another, and am doubtful whether it be right, I should ask myself, whether, in the same case, I should like to have it done to me; and if I should not, I may be sure, it is not right that I should do it to another.

Q. What do you mean by doing your duty faithfully, whatever your station is, *as to the Lord, and not unto man?*

A. I mean, that I should consider myself as a part of God's great family, which consists of all mankind. In this great family, God places some high, and others low. But every person has his station to fill; which he should endeavour to fill faithfully. And as God is our great master, our first reason for doing our duty should be to please him.

Q. How should the rich fill their stations?

A. They should consider them as trusts intended for the general good. Different stations are necessary for the good of all. Every one at sight must acknowledge, that neither the government of a family, a parish, or a country could subsist, if all were on an equality. Tho the rich therefore must live in a degree suitable to their several stations, they must have an especial care not to suffer that notion to carry them into extravagance, or the neglect of the great duty of distributing from their abundance among their poorer neigh-

neighbours. If they are so absurd, as to conceive, that God Almighty has placed them in superior stations, out of any particular regard, which he has for them; and so leaves them at liberty to spend all they have upon themselves, they will in the end find themselves sadly mistaken; and will have a strict account to give (as our blessed Saviour tells them) of the talents, with which they have been intrusted.

Q. How should the poor person fill his station so as to please God?

A. He should do all the good in his power with his little; and be content also, and satisfied with his station. He may assure himself that if he be *religious, frugal, and industrious*, he may enjoy all the real happiness, which this world is capable of giving. His industry and frugality will supply him with the necessaries of life; and his religion will teach him, that a *man's life*, (that is, his happiness) *consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*.

Q. On a supposition that the rich and poor fill their stations equally well, how will God reward them?

A. Just alike; as appears from different parts of scripture; but particularly from the widow's mite. She could do very little in comparison with the rich; and yet Christ

E

says,

says, she did more than they all—that is, she had a better disposition.

Q. What do you mean by *increasing in goodness*?

A. Getting more and more the better of my bad habits.

Q. How are you to know *you are in earnest*?

A. When I feel more pleasure in obeying God, than in committing sin.

Q. Why should a christian be *advancing always towards perfection*?

A. Because if he do not always endeavour to be better than he is, it is much to be feared, he is growing worse. True religion always makes a man wish to be better.

III.

Q. You say, you next *believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God*; and particularly in that great article of his suffering death for the sins of mankind. If you really believe this, what do you trust in for salvation?

A. In the merits of Jesus Christ; not in any thing I can do for myself.

Q. Will the merits then of Jesus Christ save you, if you are wicked?

A. Not unless I repent.

Q. Bu

Q. But if you are good, can you be saved without the merits of Jesus Christ?

A. I can never be so good, as to deserve the happiness of everlasting life. My sins will deserve punishment, and I shall still want something to save me from their effects.

Q. How then do the merits of Jesus Christ save you?

A. I must endeavour sincerely to be good; and then the merits of Jesus Christ will procure me pardon for my repented sins; and make up what I cannot do myself.

Q. But can you do *any thing* yourself towards obtaining salvation?

A. I am assured, that after all I am an *unprofitable servant*: but God is pleased to accept my imperfect services, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Q. But now besides the religious duties, which the gospel points out, our blessed Saviour hath ordained the two sacraments of *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, which in themselves are things indifferent, but are rendered binding from their being appointed by him. What is the intention of these two ceremonies?

A. *In general* they are the *figus* of our receiving christianity; and of God's giving us the privileges of it.

Q. But

Q. But what is the *particular* intention of each?

A. Baptism is intended by our blessed Saviour as the introduction, or entrance into his religion—and the *Lord's Supper* is intended to preserve in our minds the devout remembrance of his death, and atonement.

Q. The sacraments you see then are not only the signs of our receiving the privileges of christianity; but they hold out to us, the two greatest truths of our religion. What are those truths?

A. Baptism holds out to us, that we are *fallen sinners*, by shewing us, through the sign of water, that we must be purified by the grace of the gospel.—And the Lord's Supper shews us by the signs of bread and wine, that we can only be pardoned through the atoneing blood of Christ.

Q. But now as Christ hath ordained both these sacraments, why do not all christians think it as necessary to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as to bring their children to be baptized?

A. They ought; but some neglect it, as they do other good things: and some are afraid of texts of scripture, which they do not understand.

Q. What texts of scripture are they afraid of?

A. Chiefly

A. Chiefly of a passage in St. Paul, where he says, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.*

Q. To whom is the expression of *eating and drinking unworthily* applied?

A. It is applied chiefly to the Corinthians, who were guilty of drunkenness, and other crimes, when they received the Lord's supper, which was administered then in private houses, and often at the time of feasting. Whereas we, who receive it in churches, where there is no feasting, cannot be guilty of the same wicked practices, of which the Corinthians were guilty: tho at the same time, we may receive the sacrament *unworthily*, if we do not piously remember the death and atonement of Christ, when we receive it; and resolve as far as we can, to forsake our sins, which were the cause of his death.

Q. What do mean by *eating and drinking damnation to yourself*?

A. This is still applied to the unworthy manner in which the Corinthians received the Lord's supper: tho the word *damnation* means only, that God will *condemn* us, or be angry with us, for *eating and drinking unworthily*, as he is for all other wicked things: but it does not mean, that we shall certainly be *dannned* for it.

Q. What

Q. What reason is there for your receiving the sacrament of baptism only once; and the sacrament of the Lord's supper frequently?

A. Because we can only once enter into the christian religion; but we are required frequently to shew, that we are members of it, by remembring the death and atonement of our blessed Saviour, and by renewing the engagements, which we made, when we became members of his holy religion.

IV.

Q. You said you believed, that *God would assist you by his holy spirit*, as you could do nothing to please God without his assistance: how is the assistance of his holy spirit to be obtained?

A. I must first pray to God through the mediation of Christ, for this holy assistance; and at the same time I must use my own best endeavours in doing what I can myself; trusting in God, that he will enable me to overcome such temptations, as I could not overcome without his assistance.

V.

Q. Lastly, you say, you believe in a future state, and in the resurrection of the dead—that

is, you say, you believe you shall live in another world, after you leave this: and that even your body will not remain in the grave; but will rise again, and be joined to your soul: if then you really and sincerely *believe* all this, what *effect* should it have upon you?

A. It should raise my thoughts above this mortal life. I should not think intirely about this world; but consider that I am to live in another world after this. And tho, while I live in this world, it is necessary for me to think about its concerns, yet when I consider, that in the next world I am to live for ever; and in this world only a few years, it is certainly right, that I should think more about the next world, than about this.

Q. You say likewise that you *believe in a last judgment*—that is, you say, you believe that hereafter you shall be called to account for every thing you have done in this world; and that you shall be rewarded, or punished, according to what you have done: Now if you really believe this great truth, how should you be *affected* by it?

A. I should be in earnest careful to prepare myself for this awful judgment by sincerely endeavouring to do my duty to God, and man; or in other words, by *believing and living as a christian ought to do.*

THE END.

A PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God, who through thy good providence hath added one day more to our lives, graciously accept our praise and thanksgiving for this, and all thy other mercies—for our creation—our constant preservation—and particularly for the hopes of future happiness, which thou hast given us through our Lord Jesus Christ.—That we may turn all thy mercies, as thou intendest them, into blessings, grant us the assistance of thy holy spirit, to make this, and every day, an improvement of the last. May we always consider thou hast created us to make us happy in heaven, if it be not through our own fault. Grant therefore, O Lord, that we may consider sin of every kind, as the worst of all evils, because it will destroy our souls.—And if, through the frailty of human nature, we should be so unhappy, as to displease thee by doing what we know is wrong, grant us thy grace immediately to repent, and forsake it from our hearts, imploring thy forgiveness, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who died to redeem us from sin.—Let thy holy spirit, O Lord, guide, and

and direct us in all our affairs, both spiritual, and temporal. To thee we commend ourselves this (morning, evening.) Relying on thy holy protection, and guarded against temptation by the knowledge of thy continual presence, may we all humbly endeavour to please thee ; and having performed our duty faithfully in this world, may we so pass through things temporal, that we may finally obtain the things eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; in whose words we farther call upon thee.

Our Father, &c.

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